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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Jackson, Mississippi  
September 24, 1968

FIRE IN LAUNDRY AT  
WATKINS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL,  
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI,  
SEPTEMBER 21, 1968

On the evening of September 21, 1968, M. B. Pierce, Chief of Detectives, Jackson, Mississippi, Police Department, advised a Special Agent of the Jackson Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) office as follows:

At about 7:00 p.m. on this evening, a fire occurred at the Watkins Elementary School, 3915 Watkins Drive, Jackson, Mississippi. The fire was confined to a laundry room area which is a former gymnasium that is now used for cleaning sports uniforms for the various public school teams in Jackson. The fire was under control after 8:30 p.m.; and at the present time, the cause of the fire is unknown.

Chief Pierce noted that the Watkins Elementary School is located in north Jackson in an area which contains, alternately, concentrations of Negro and white residents. He noted that Watkins Elementary School has a very high percentage of whites and Negroes in attendance. He said he determined that there have been no indications that the fire in the laundry room was in any way connected with any racial tension or racial situation surrounding the Watkins Elementary School. He said due to the large amount of

- 11 - Bureau
- 1 - USA, Jackson
- 1 - Secret Service, Jackson
- 2 - MIGp, Jackson
- ① - Jackson (157-New) (C)

TF/blw  
(16)

157-10319-1

Searched \_\_\_\_\_  
Serialized \_\_\_\_\_  
Indexed \_\_\_\_\_  
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FIRE IN LAUNDRY AT  
WATKINS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL,  
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI  
SEPTEMBER 21, 1968

laundry-type equipment in the building where the fire occurred, it could very easily have been caused by a malfunction in some type of equipment.

Chief Pierce said he would advise the FBI should any pertinent information be developed to indicate there are any racial overtones regarding the cause for the above fire; however, he again reiterated that it does not appear to be arson.

Chief Pierce said school officials have advised that school would be open on Monday, September 23, 1968, as usual since none of the school buildings themselves were damaged.

Appropriate local, state, and Federal authorities advised.

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI

FROM : SAC, JACKSON (157-New) (C)

SUBJECT: FIRE IN LAUNDRY AT  
WATKINS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL,  
JACKSON, MISS., 9/21/68  
RM  
(OO: JACKSON)

DATE: 9/24/68

Enclosed for the Bureau are eleven copies of an LHM in captioned matter.

One copy of LHM forwarded to United States Attorney, Jackson, and Secret Service, Jackson; two copies forwarded MIGp, Jackson.

UACB, Jackson Division not conducting any additional investigation regarding captioned matter unless specific information indicating racial overtones determined.

157-10319-2

2 - Bureau (Enc. 11) (RM)  
1 - Jackson  
TF/blw  
(B)



Copy 4-3-68

*[Handwritten signature]* 9-24-68  
157-New  
Fitzpatrick *[Handwritten signature]*

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